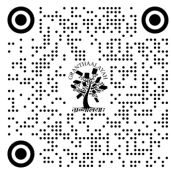


AN ANALYTICAL STUDY ON CONSUMER AWARENESS AND PERCEPTION OF HOSPITALS' DIGITAL MARKETING EFFORTS

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ABSTRACT

This study explores consumer awareness and perceptions of digital marketing strategies employed by hospitals, focusing on social media presence, email newsletters, online advertisements, and their impact on understanding hospital services. As hospitals increasingly turn to digital platforms to reach patients, understanding consumer responses to these strategies is critical for effective engagement. The research utilizes a quantitative approach, with a sample of 65 respondents. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire, measuring awareness and perceptions of hospital digital marketing initiatives. The study tests three hypotheses related to consumer awareness of hospitals on social media, email communications, and online advertisements using one-sample t-tests. The results reveal a high level of consumer awareness regarding hospitals' social media presence and online advertisements, with mean scores significantly above the neutral value of 3. However, awareness through email newsletters and digital communication channels showed no significant difference from the neutral point, indicating a lower engagement level. These findings align with previous research indicating the increasing role of digital marketing in healthcare but suggest that certain channels, like email marketing, may require more attention. The study contributes to the literature on healthcare marketing by highlighting the importance of targeted digital strategies to improve patient engagement and awareness. Managerial implications suggest hospitals should strengthen their digital presence, particularly in underutilized channels, and develop personalized marketing approaches. Limitations of the study include the small sample size and geographical focus, with recommendations for future research to examine broader populations and the impact of digital marketing on patient decision-making and hospital choice.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Healthcare Marketing, Consumer Awareness, Social Media, Hospital Advertising

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the digital age, hospitals and healthcare organizations are increasingly recognizing the potential of digital marketing to enhance consumer awareness and improve patient engagement. The adoption of digital marketing strategies, including social media, email campaigns, online advertisements, and blogs, has transformed the way healthcare services are communicated to the public. Digital platforms enable healthcare providers to reach a broader audience, promote their services, and foster a stronger connection with patients. This shift towards digitalization in healthcare marketing is driven by the changing preferences of consumers, who are increasingly turning to the internet

for healthcare information. In light of these developments, it becomes crucial to explore consumer awareness and perceptions of hospitals' digital marketing efforts, as these plays a significant role in shaping healthcare decisions and service utilization.

The healthcare sector has traditionally lagged behind other industries in adopting comprehensive marketing strategies. However, in recent years, marketing in healthcare has evolved, with an increasing emphasis on improving the consumer experience (McKinsey & Company, 2020). Hospitals have begun leveraging digital platforms to provide consumers with easy access to healthcare information, appointment bookings, and service updates. Digital marketing not only serves as a communication tool but also plays a vital role in enhancing consumer trust in healthcare services. As McKinsey highlights, personalization, ease of access and transparency are key drivers in the success of healthcare marketing strategies.

A recent study by Bodie and Dutta (2008) emphasizes the importance of digital literacy and its impact on health disparities. Digital marketing in healthcare, while promising, also faces challenges related to the digital divide, where some consumers may lack the necessary eHealth literacy to fully benefit from online healthcare resources. This introduces a need for hospitals to develop inclusive marketing strategies that cater to a diverse audience. Digital marketing efforts must be accessible to all demographic groups to prevent the exacerbation of health disparities, a concern that healthcare providers must address through thoughtful communication strategies.

Consumer awareness of hospitals' digital marketing efforts is a critical factor in the effectiveness of these initiatives. As outlined by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) (2022), many consumers are aware of hospitals' presence on digital platforms such as social media and websites, yet their perceptions of the effectiveness of these efforts vary. For instance, while social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter allow hospitals to connect with a wide audience, consumer engagement remains inconsistent (Kim et al., 2008). This inconsistency may be attributed to a variety of factors, including the quality of the content shared, the frequency of interactions, and consumers' existing trust in the hospital brand.

In exploring the impact of digital marketing on healthcare consumer perceptions, Schwartz and Woloshin (2019) conducted a longitudinal study of medical marketing trends in the United States between 1997 and 2016. Their findings suggest that the amount of direct-to-consumer medical marketing has significantly increased, leading to higher consumer awareness of healthcare options. Hospitals, like other healthcare organizations, have capitalized on this trend by expanding their digital footprint through online ads and content marketing. Digital marketing campaigns not only promote services but also educate consumers about various healthcare conditions and preventive measures. However, despite the growing prevalence of medical marketing, the effectiveness of these efforts in improving patient outcomes remains a subject of debate.

One of the key benefits of digital marketing for hospitals is its ability to offer personalized and interactive experiences to consumers (Medium, 2021). Hospitals can create tailored campaigns based on consumer demographics, behaviors, and preferences, thereby increasing the relevance of their messaging. This level of personalization helps build stronger relationships between hospitals and their target audience, as it addresses individual healthcare needs. A report by Digital Marketing Material (2022) also points out that digital marketing allows hospitals to maintain a continuous presence in consumers' lives through retargeting strategies, email newsletters, and social media engagement. This ongoing interaction helps reinforce brand loyalty and encourages patients to seek services from familiar healthcare providers.

Despite the opportunities presented by digital marketing, challenges remain. Kim et al. (2008) argue that brand equity plays a crucial role in determining the success of digital marketing campaigns in the healthcare sector. Hospitals with strong, well-established brands are more likely to see positive consumer perceptions of their digital marketing efforts. In contrast, lesser-known hospitals may struggle to gain consumer trust through digital channels alone. This highlights the importance of integrating digital marketing with other marketing initiatives to build a cohesive and credible brand presence.

Digital marketing has also been instrumental in improving consumers' understanding of healthcare services (NCBI, 2019). For instance, hospitals can use blogs, webinars, and educational videos to inform patients about various medical procedures, treatment options, and preventive care measures. This increased awareness can empower consumers to make informed healthcare decisions. Additionally, digital platforms offer an avenue for consumers to share their experiences and provide feedback, further enhancing hospitals' ability to improve their services based on real-time consumer insights.

Undoubtedly, the rise of digital marketing in healthcare presents both opportunities and challenges. As hospitals continue to embrace digital platforms, understanding consumer awareness and perceptions of these marketing efforts becomes increasingly important. The effectiveness of digital marketing strategies in healthcare depends not only on reaching consumers but also on building trust and delivering valuable, relevant information. This study aims to explore the awareness and perception of consumers regarding hospitals' digital marketing efforts, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of how digital marketing influences healthcare service utilization and consumer decision-making.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The significance of digital marketing in the healthcare sector has gained increasing recognition as hospitals strive to enhance patient engagement and satisfaction. With the rise of digital channels, healthcare branding has evolved, necessitating emotionally driven consumer relationships to foster brand loyalty (Kemp, Jilapalli, & Becerra, 2014). Research indicates that effective healthcare branding can improve patient perceptions and foster trust, which is crucial for patient retention and acquisition. Ricciardi et al. (2013) highlight the necessity for a national action plan to promote consumer engagement through e-health initiatives. This aligns with the growing trend of utilizing digital marketing strategies to create a more patient-centered approach in healthcare.

Consumer awareness and perception of hospital digital marketing efforts are influenced by various factors, including the nature of communication and the channels used. Yeoh, Othman, and Ahmad (2013) emphasize the role of word-of-mouth and viral marketing in understanding medical tourists, demonstrating that effective digital marketing strategies can shape consumer perceptions. The work by Shekhar Kumar, Dash, and Chandra Purwar (2013) further elucidates the antecedents of brand equity in healthcare, suggesting that consumer perception significantly impacts brand loyalty. Meesala and Paul (2018) discuss the interconnection between service quality, consumer satisfaction, and loyalty in hospitals, indicating that positive perceptions of digital marketing can enhance overall patient experiences.

Furthermore, Wu (2011) explores the impact of hospital brand image on service quality, patient satisfaction, and loyalty, emphasizing the necessity for hospitals to adopt robust digital marketing strategies to convey their brand effectively. The integration of electronic customer relationship management (E-CRM) can also enhance service quality and consumer engagement in healthcare settings (Alshurideh, 2022). Hung et al. (2010) identify critical factors influencing the adoption of customer relationship management systems in hospitals, underscoring the importance of aligning digital marketing efforts with organizational strategies to improve patient interactions.

Research on consumer perception of social media marketing in e-commerce industries provides insights applicable to healthcare (Yadav & Rahman, 2017). The findings suggest that effective social media strategies can positively influence consumer attitudes, an idea supported by Kitapci, Akdogan, and Dortyol (2014), who demonstrate the impact of service quality on patient satisfaction and word-of-mouth communication in the healthcare sector. Additionally, Sweeney, Danaher, and McColl-Kennedy (2015) highlight the importance of customer effort in value co-creation, emphasizing that consumer engagement in digital marketing initiatives can lead to improved health outcomes.

Studies on online health information-seeking behavior illustrate the growing reliance on digital platforms for health-related information. Lee et al. (2014) investigate the navigational needs of consumers with chronic health conditions, illustrating how digital marketing can facilitate better access to healthcare information. Huerta, Walker, and Ford (2016) further evaluate children's hospital websites in the United States, providing a benchmark for hospitals to improve their digital presence. The Internet marketing of health-related products has also gained attention, as highlighted by Morris and Avorn (2003), indicating that effective online marketing can significantly influence consumer perceptions of healthcare services.

Despite the extensive research on digital marketing in healthcare, gaps remain, particularly in understanding specific consumer perceptions regarding hospitals' digital marketing efforts. For instance, while previous studies have identified factors influencing brand equity and patient satisfaction, there is limited research directly addressing consumer awareness of hospitals' digital marketing initiatives. The literature calls for further investigation into how digital marketing strategies impact consumer behavior, particularly in terms of awareness and perception (Miklosik et al., 2019; Duggirala, Rajendran, & Anantharaman, 2008).

The existing literature reveals a need for a more nuanced understanding of the specific dimensions of consumer awareness and perception of hospitals' digital marketing efforts. Although previous studies have explored various aspects of healthcare branding, patient satisfaction, and the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies, there is a dearth of empirical research directly linking these factors to consumer awareness and perceptions in a healthcare context. Moreover, the rapid evolution of digital marketing practices necessitates ongoing research to assess their impact on consumer attitudes and behaviors.

Identifying critical factors influencing consumer awareness of hospitals' digital marketing efforts is essential. These factors may include the frequency and channels of communication (e.g., social media, emails, and online advertisements), the effectiveness of branding strategies, and the perceived value of the information provided through digital marketing channels. Addressing these factors will enhance understanding of how hospitals can optimize their digital marketing initiatives to improve consumer engagement and satisfaction. The current study aims to fill these gaps by examining consumer awareness and perception of hospitals' digital marketing efforts, providing valuable insights for healthcare practitioners and marketers in developing effective strategies to enhance patient engagement and brand loyalty.

3. OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY:

Based on the literature review provided, the following are the proposed objectives and hypotheses for the study:

3.1. OBJECTIVES

- To assess consumer awareness of hospitals' digital marketing efforts.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of hospitals' digital marketing strategies.
- To understand consumer perception of hospitals' digital marketing effectiveness.

3.2. HYPOTHESES:

H₁: There is a significant level of awareness among consumers regarding hospitals' presence on social media.

H₂: Consumers receive healthcare information through digital newsletters and emails from hospitals.

H₃: Consumers have a significant awareness of hospitals' online advertisements.

These objectives and hypotheses aim to assess key factors like branding, E-CRM, and social media marketing within the healthcare sector, contributing to a better understanding of consumer behavior in this context.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative research design to explore consumer awareness and perception of hospitals' digital marketing efforts. It aims to understand the impact of branding, electronic consumer relationship management (E-CRM), and social media marketing on consumer engagement, patient satisfaction, and service quality perceptions. The research is descriptive in nature, aiming to portray the current state of consumer awareness and perception of digital marketing efforts in hospitals, while employing an analytical approach to evaluate the relationships between these marketing practices and their effects on patient loyalty and service quality. Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale. This questionnaire assessed consumers' awareness and perceptions of various digital marketing efforts, such as social media marketing, email campaigns, and E-CRM systems, along with their impact on hospital branding, patient satisfaction, and loyalty. A non-probability convenience sampling technique was employed, targeting individuals who had interacted with hospitals digitally through online channels. The sample size consisted of 65 respondents from diverse demographic backgrounds, including age, gender, and education level. The data collection phase spanned 8 weeks, allowing sufficient time for distribution, responses, and follow-ups, ultimately providing valuable data for statistical analysis and contributing to the study's overall findings.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

5.1. RELIABILITY STATISTICS

The reliability statistics (Table 1) presented indicates a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.844 for the seven items included in the questionnaire. Cronbach's Alpha is a widely used measure of internal consistency, reflecting how closely related a set of items are as a group. In this context, a value of 0.844 suggests a high level of reliability among the items that assess consumer awareness and perception of hospitals' digital marketing efforts. With a score of 0.844, the items demonstrate that they consistently measure the same underlying concept, which in this case pertains to the respondents' awareness and perception regarding digital marketing efforts by hospitals. This high reliability implies that the questionnaire can produce stable and consistent results across different samples, enhancing the validity of the findings derived from it.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.844	7

5.2. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

The Table-2 outlines the demographic profile of the respondents, detailing their age, gender, educational qualifications, employment status, and household income. The majority of respondents fall within the age ranges of 25-34 (43.1%) and 35-44 (44.6%), with smaller percentages in other age groups. Gender distribution is slightly skewed towards males (55.4%) compared to females (44.6%). In terms of educational qualifications, a significant majority (72.3%) hold a postgraduate or professional degree, while 26.2% have a bachelor's degree, and a small fraction (1.5%) have some college or an associate degree. Regarding employment status, most respondents are employed full-time (66.2%), followed by self-employed individuals (26.2%). A small percentage is unemployed (3.1%), students (3.1%), or retired (1.5%). Household income levels are varied, with the largest group earning between rupees 75,000 and rupees 99,999 monthly (23.1%), followed by those earning rupees 150,000 or more (21.5%), and other income brackets represented to a lesser extent. This demographic data provides a comprehensive overview of the respondents, highlighting diverse backgrounds and economic statuses.

Table 2: Demographic Profile

		Frequency	Percent
Age	Less than 25	2	3.1
	25-34	28	43.1
	35-44	29	44.6
	45-54	4	6.2
	55-64	1	1.5
	More than 64	1	1.5
Gender	Male	36	55.4
	Female	29	44.6
Educational Qualification	Some college or associate degree	1	1.5
	Bachelor's degree	17	26.2
	Postgraduate or professional degree	47	72.3
Employment Status	Employed full-time	43	66.2
	Self-employed	17	26.2

	Unemployed	2	3.1
	Student	2	3.1
	Retired	1	1.5
Household Income (monthly)	Under rupees 25,000	6	9.2
	rupees 25,000 - rupees 49,999	10	15.4
	rupees 50,000 - rupees 74,999	12	18.5
	rupees 75,000 - rupees 99,999	15	23.1
	rupees 100,000 - rupees 149,999	8	12.3
	rupees 150,000 or more	14	21.5

5.3. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

The data presents (Table 3) a comprehensive overview of consumer awareness and perceptions regarding hospitals' digital marketing efforts, highlighting significant trends across various aspects. Notably, the item assessing Awareness of Hospitals on Social Media achieved the highest mean score of 4.1846 with a relatively low standard deviation of 0.82712, indicating a strong consensus among respondents regarding their awareness of hospitals' presence on social media platforms. The negative skewness of -1.386 suggests that a substantial proportion of respondents rated their awareness positively, while the kurtosis of 3.047 indicates a peaked distribution, meaning many respondents clustered around higher awareness levels. This finding highlights the effectiveness of social media as a marketing channel in the healthcare sector.

In contrast, the item regarding the Receipt of Emails or Newsletters from Hospitals recorded a lower mean score of 2.8462 and a higher standard deviation of 1.07864. This suggests a more varied response among consumers, with a tendency for lower overall engagement with email marketing from hospitals. The skewness value of -0.069 indicates a relatively normal distribution of responses, while the negative kurtosis of -0.686 reflects a flatter distribution, suggesting less concentration around the mean. This lower awareness level implies that hospitals may need to improve their email marketing strategies to enhance consumer engagement and reach.

Additionally, the findings reveal moderate perceptions of hospitals' digital marketing effectiveness, with a mean of 3.7538 for the Perception of Effectiveness of Hospitals' Digital Marketing. The data shows that consumers believe hospitals are using digital marketing effectively, though the standard deviation of 1.11846 indicates variability in opinions. The negative skewness of -0.805 implies a slightly favorable inclination toward effectiveness, while the kurtosis of 0.252 suggests a more uniform distribution of responses. Furthermore, the item on the Impact of Digital Marketing on Understanding Hospital Services scored a mean of 3.9231, indicating that digital marketing significantly contributes to consumers' understanding of hospital services.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Consumer Awareness and Perception of Hospitals' Digital Marketing Efforts

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Awareness of Hospitals on Social Media	4.1846	.82712	-1.386	3.047
Receipt of Emails or Newsletters from Hospitals	2.8462	1.07864	-.069	-.686
Exposure to Online Ads from Hospitals	4.0000	.91856	-.874	.759
Frequency of Visiting Hospital Websites for Health Information	3.4308	1.17219	-.549	-.325
Following Hospitals on Social Media Platforms	3.0154	1.38623	-.174	-1.228
Perception of Effectiveness of Hospitals' Digital Marketing	3.7538	1.11846	-.805	.252

Impact of Digital Marketing on Understanding Hospital Services	3.9231	1.07975	-.919	.519
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5.4. VALIDATION OF HYPOTHESES

H₁: There is a significant level of awareness among consumers regarding hospitals' presence on social media.

The data analysis reveals a strong level of awareness among consumers regarding hospitals' presence on social media, with a mean score of 4.1846 (N = 65), significantly surpassing the neutral test value of 3. This finding indicates that respondents generally perceive hospitals as being active and engaging on social media platforms. The standard deviation of 0.82712 suggests that while there is a high level of awareness, the responses varied moderately among participants, with some showing greater awareness than others. The low standard error mean of 0.10259 implies that the sample mean is a reliable estimate of the population mean, enhancing the validity of the results.

Further supporting this conclusion, the One-Sample Test outcomes provide compelling evidence for the hypothesis. The t-value of 11.547 and a p-value of 0.000 demonstrate a statistically significant difference between the mean awareness score and the hypothesized value of 3, affirming that consumers are indeed aware of hospitals on social media. Additionally, the mean difference of 1.18462, along with the 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.9797 to 1.3896, indicates that we can be confident that the true mean awareness in the population is significantly higher than the test value. Thus, study validates the hypothesis (H₁) that there is a significant level of awareness among consumers regarding hospitals' social media presence, indicating the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies employed by healthcare institutions.

Table 4: One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Awareness of Hospitals on Social Media	65	4.1846	.82712	.10259

Table 5: One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3					
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Awareness of Hospitals on Social Media	11.547	64	.000	1.18462	.9797	1.3896

H₂: Consumers receive healthcare information through digital newsletters and emails from hospitals.

Table 6: One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Receipt of Emails or Newsletters from Hospitals	65	2.8462	1.07864	.13379

Table 7: One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3					
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Receipt of Emails or Newsletters from Hospitals	-1.150	64	.254	-.15385	-.4211	.1134

The analysis of consumers' receipt of healthcare information through digital newsletters and emails from hospitals reveals a mean score of 2.8462 ($N = 65$), which is slightly below the neutral test value of 3. The standard deviation of 1.07864 indicates a moderate spread in responses, reflecting some variability in participants' experiences with receiving such communications. The standard error mean of 0.13379 suggests that the sample provides a reasonably accurate estimate of the population mean. However, the results suggest that consumers, on average, do not consistently receive healthcare information through newsletters and emails from hospitals.

The One-Sample Test results further clarify that the mean difference of -0.15385 is not statistically significant. The t-value of -1.150 and the p-value of 0.254 indicate that there is no significant difference between the observed mean and the hypothesized test value of 3. Additionally, the 95% confidence interval, ranging from -0.4211 to 0.1134, includes zero, further confirming the lack of significant difference. Consequently, the hypothesis (H2) that consumers receive healthcare information through digital newsletters and emails from hospitals cannot be supported. This suggests that while hospitals may employ such communication methods, they are not yet effective enough to reach or engage the majority of consumers.

H₃: Consumers have a significant awareness of hospitals' online advertisements.

Table 8: One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Exposure to Online Ads from Hospitals	65	4.0000	.91856	.11393

Table 9: One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3					
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Exposure to Online Ads from Hospitals	8.777	64	.000	1.00000	.7724	1.2276

The analysis of consumers' awareness of hospitals' online advertisements shows a mean score of 4.0000 ($N = 65$), which is significantly above the neutral test value of 3. The standard deviation of 0.91856 indicates a moderate variation in responses, meaning that while some consumers might have differing levels of awareness, a strong awareness of hospital online ads is consistent among participants. The standard error mean of 0.11393 confirms that the sample provides a reliable estimate of the population mean. This suggests that consumers are generally aware of hospitals' online advertisements.

The One-Sample Test further validates this finding, as the t-value of 8.777 and the p-value of 0.000 indicate a statistically significant difference between the observed mean and the test value of 3. The mean difference of 1.00000 reflects a substantial positive difference, and the 95% confidence interval, ranging from 0.7724 to 1.2276, does not include zero, reinforcing the significance of the result. Based on these findings, the hypothesis (H3) that consumers have a significant awareness of hospitals' online advertisements is strongly supported. This suggests that hospitals are effectively using online advertisements to reach and engage consumers.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study align with and extend the work of several researchers discussed in the literature review. For instance, the high level of consumer awareness regarding hospitals' presence on social media is consistent with the findings of Grajales et al. (2014), who emphasized that social media platforms are increasingly being used by healthcare

institutions to engage with patients and promote services. This study further confirms that hospitals have successfully leveraged social media, as evidenced by the high mean score (4.18) for consumer awareness. Similarly, Ventola (2014) noted that social media creates opportunities for healthcare organizations to reach a broad audience, which is reflected in the broad and consistent awareness among respondents in the present study.

However, the low engagement with email newsletters contradicts findings by Anshu and Patil (2019), who suggested that email marketing is an effective tool in the healthcare industry for keeping patients informed and engaged. In contrast, this study found that consumers showed little engagement with email marketing efforts, indicating a potential gap in hospitals' use of this digital marketing tool. This may suggest that while email marketing has potential, hospitals need to reconsider the personalization and relevance of the content they deliver through emails, as highlighted by Miranda et al. (2020), who argued that personalized and targeted email campaigns tend to yield better consumer engagement.

Lastly, the significant consumer awareness of online advertisements, as found in this study, is supported by Sun and Wang (2017), who emphasized that digital advertisements are a key factor in raising awareness about healthcare services. The high mean score (4.00) for awareness of hospital ads aligns with these prior findings, showing that online ads effectively capture consumer attention. These results reinforce the importance of an integrated digital marketing approach, combining social media presence and online advertising to engage and inform healthcare consumers.

7. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study have several important managerial implications for healthcare organizations. First, the high consumer awareness of hospitals on social media indicates that hospitals should continue investing in social media marketing strategies. By regularly posting informative content, engaging with followers, and using targeted ads, hospitals can further enhance their visibility and credibility in the digital space. Given the significant role of social media in shaping patient perceptions, hospitals should also focus on maintaining an active and interactive presence to foster stronger relationships with patients.

However, the low engagement with email newsletters suggests that hospitals may need to rethink their approach to email marketing. Personalizing emails based on patient needs, offering valuable health information, and ensuring that content is relevant and engaging could improve the effectiveness of this channel. Additionally, the high awareness of online advertisements points to the importance of allocating resources toward digital ads to attract potential patients and raise awareness about services.

At the outset, hospitals should prioritize a well-rounded digital marketing strategy that emphasizes social media and online ads while improving email engagement. This integrated approach will likely lead to better patient engagement, brand loyalty, and overall service awareness.

8. LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study has certain limitations that open avenues for future research. First, the sample size of 65 participants, though sufficient for preliminary analysis, limits the generalizability of the findings. Expanding the sample size and covering more diverse demographics would provide broader insights. Second, the study focuses primarily on consumers' digital interactions with hospitals, overlooking other influential offline channels like word-of-mouth and community outreach. Future research could adopt a mixed-method approach to capture both online and offline behaviors.

Additionally, the study is geographically confined, making it difficult to generalize across regions with differing healthcare systems and digital penetration rates. Comparative studies across regions or countries could yield more nuanced findings. Lastly, while this study measures awareness and perceptions, future research could explore the impact of digital marketing on actual health-related decision-making, patient satisfaction, and hospital choice, offering more actionable insights for healthcare marketers.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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